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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANTS: Bove et al.

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TITLE: A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR SWITCHING
BETWEEN MULTIPLE PROGRAMS BY INTERACTING
WITH A HYPERLINKED TELEVISION BROADCAST

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

With regard to the Application identified above, Applicants respectfully submit the following Preliminary Amendment. Applicants believe that no fees are due, but the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 20-0531.

AMENDMENTS

In the Title:

Please change the title of the application to -- A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR SWITCHING BETWEEN MULTIPLE PROGRAMS BY INTERACTING WITH A HYPERLINKED TELEVISION BROADCAST --.

In the Specification:

Please cancel claims 1-51 without prejudice.

In the Claims:

--(New) 52. A hyperlinked video broadcast system including a plurality of multiplexed video streams each having a plurality of video frames, said system comprising:

a receiver capable of receiving viewer stream selection input identifying one of said plurality of mask overlays selected by a viewer and switching from presenting to said viewer a first one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams to presenting to said viewer a second one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams in response to said viewer stream selection input.

(New) 54. The system of claim 52 wherein said plurality of mask overlays comprise location and shape information of said plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames.

a mask generator generating a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames; and

a receiver capable of receiving viewer stream selection input identifying one of said plurality of mask overlays selected by a viewer and switching from presenting to said viewer a first one of said plurality of multiplexed audio streams to presenting to

said viewer a second one of said plurality of multiplexed audio streams in response to said viewer stream selection input.

(New) 56. The system of claim 55 wherein said viewer stream selection input is reported to a remote location via a backchannel communications connections.

(New) 57. The system of claim 55 wherein said mask overlays comprise location and shape information of said plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames.

(New) 58. A hyperlinked video reception system including a plurality of input multiplexed video streams each having a plurality of video frames, said system comprising:

a mask presenter rendering a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames;

a receiver receiving stream selection input from a viewer specifying a first one of said plurality of input multiplexed video streams by identifying one of said plurality of mask overlays,

wherein said receiver switches from presenting to said viewer a second one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams to presenting to said viewer said first one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams in response to said viewer stream selection input.

(New) 59. The system of claim 58 wherein said viewer stream selection input is reported to a remote location via a backchannel communications connections.

(New) 60. The system of claim 58 wherein said mask overlays comprise location and shape information of said plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames.

(New) 64. A method for switching between multiplexed video streams in a hyperlinked video broadcast system including a plurality video streams each having a plurality of video frames, said method comprising:

switching from presenting to said viewer a second one of said plurality of multiplexed audio streams to presenting to said viewer said first one of said plurality of multiplexed audio streams in response to said viewer stream selection input.

(New) 68. The method of claim 67 further comprising reporting said viewer stream selection input to a remote location input via a backchannel communications connections.

(New) 69. The method of claim 67 wherein said mask overlays comprises location and shape information of said plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames.

(New) 70. A method for switching between video streams in a hyperlinked video reception system including a plurality of input multiplexed video streams each having a plurality of video frames, said method comprising:

rendering a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames;

receiving stream selection input from a viewer specifying a first one of said plurality of input multiplexed video streams by identifying one of said plurality of mask overlays; and

switching from presenting to said viewer a second one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams to presenting to said viewer said first one of said plurality of multiplexed video streams in response to said viewer stream selection input.

(New) 71. The method of claim 70 further comprising reporting said viewer stream selection input to a remote location via a backchannel communications connections.

(New) 72. The method of claim 70 wherein said mask overlays comprises location and shape information of said plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames.

(New) 73. A method for switching between hyperlinked video streams in a hyperlinked video stream system having a plurality of video streams each including a plurality of video frames said method comprising:

generating a plurality of video stream identifiers each associated with one of said plurality of video streams;

generating a plurality of mask overlays corresponding to a plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames;

generating a first data structure element referenced by a set of said plurality of mask overlays;

generating a second data structure element referenced by said first data structure element, said second data structure element containing a reference to a first one of said plurality of video streams;

generating a current video stream identifier corresponding to a second one of said plurality of video streams;

receiving viewer stream selection input identifying said one of said plurality of mask overlays; and

making said current video stream identifier correspond to said second one of said plurality of video streams in response to said viewer stream selection input.

(New) 74. The method of claim 73 wherein said mask overlays comprise location and shape information of said plurality of regions in said plurality of video frames.

(New) 75. The method of claim 73 wherein said reference to a first one of said plurality of video streams references a third data structure element including references to an audio stream and a private data stream associated with said first one of said plurality of video streams.--

REMARKS

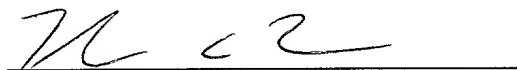
Claims 1-51 were presented in this continuation application. Claims 1-51 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 52-75 have been added. Claims 52-75 remain in the present application for examination.

Applicants have amended the Specification to make reference to a currently pending application from which continuation status is claimed. The amendment to the Specification adds no new matter.

CONCLUSION

Applicants request that the Examiner consider the application and the new claims as presently amended at the Examiner's earliest convenience. If, in the Examiner's opinion, a telephonic interview would expedite the favorable prosecution of the present application, the undersigned attorney would welcome the opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues, and to work with the Examiner toward placing the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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